

# Spark Gap

January 2000

## FCC delivers

**Amateur Restructuring is Here  
Three License Classes, One  
Code Speed.**

**Newington, CT. DEC.30  
1999**

Amateur Radio will get a new look in the new millennium. The FCC today issued its long-awaited Report and Order in the 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review of Part 97 more commonly known as "license restructuring." The bottom line is that starting April 15, 2000, there will be three license classes—Technician, General and Amateur Extra—and a single Morse Code requirement—5 WPM.

"We believe that an individual's ability to demonstrate increased Morse Code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of that individual's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art," the FCC said.

Besides drastically streamlining the Amateur Radio licensing process, the FCC said its actions would "eliminate unnecessary requirements that may discourage or limit individuals from becoming trained operators, technicians and electronic experts."

Although no new Novice and

Advanced licenses will be issued after the effective date of the Report and Order, the FCC does not plan to automatically upgrade any existing license privileges. The ARRL had proposed an one-time across the board upgrading of Novice and Tech Plus licensees to General class, but the FCC declined to adopt the idea. This means that current licensees will retain their current operating privileges, including access to various modes and subbands, and will be able to renew their licenses indefinitely. Starting April 15, 2000, individuals who qualified for Technician class license prior to March 21, 1987, will be able to upgrade to General class by providing documentary proof to a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator, paying an application fee, and completing FCC form 605.

The FCC's decision not to upgrade Novice and Tech Plus licensees means the current Novice/Tech Plus HF privileges will remain and not be reformed to higher class licensees as the ARRL had proposed. As it had proposed earlier, the FCC decided to lump Technician and Tech Plus licensees into a single licensee database, all designated as "Technician class" licensees.

Those who can document having passed a 5 WPM Morse Code examination will continue to have the current Tech Plus HF privileges. "If documentation is needed to verify whether a licensee has passed a telegraphy examination, we may request documentation from that licensee or the VECs," the FCC said.

In addition to reducing the number of license classes from six to three and eliminating the 20 and 13 WPM code tests, the FCC also will reduce the number of written examination elements from five to three, authorize Advanced Class hams to prepare and administer General class examinations, and eliminate Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) station licensees. RACES will remain however. After review of the record, we concluded that we should eliminate RACES station licenses because RACES station licenses are unnecessary for Amateur stations and Amateur service licenses to provide emergency communications," the FCC said.

Under the new licensing scheme there will be four examination elements. Element 1 will be a 5 WPM Morse Code exam.

Element 2 will be a 35 question written test to obtain a Technician license; Element 3 will be a 35 question written exam to obtain a General license, and Element 4 will be a 50 question written exam. to obtain an Amateur Extra Class license. The FCC has left it in the hands of the National Conference of VECs Question Pool Committee to determine the specific mix and makeup of written examination questions.

Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

The FCC's new licensing plan means someone will be able to become ham by passing a single 35 question written examination. The plan also simplifies and shortens the upgrade path from the ground floor through Amateur Extra especially since amateurs will only have to pass one Morse Code test.

Elimination of the 13 and 20 WPM Morse requirements also means an end to the physicians certification waivers for applicants claiming an inability to pass the Morse Code examination due to physical handicap.

The effective date provides a window of upgrade for current Advanced licensees. Between now and April 15, current Advanced holders may take the existing Element 4B, a 40 question test, giving them credit for

having passed the current Extra written examination. Likewise, holders of a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) for Elements 3B and 4B dated on or before April 17, 1999, will be able to qualify for General or Amateur Extra respectively when the new rules go into effect on April 15, 2000.

The FCC disagreed with the League's suggestion that it undertake a restructuring of operating privileges along with licensing restructuring. "We believe that in light of ongoing discussions concerning implementation of new and more modern communications technologies within the Amateur service community, we should accord the Amateur service community an opportunity to complete such discussions and possibly reach a consensus regarding implementation of new technologies before we undertake a comprehensive restructuring of the Amateur service operating privileges and frequencies," the FCC said in its Report and Order.

In its amendments to Part 97, the FCC's Report and Order refers to a "Club Station Call Sign Administrator," something that does not exist under the current rules and which was not explained in the R&O itself. An FCC spokesperson said the

Commission plans to issue a Public Notice soon to explain the program and solicit qualified entities to serve as call sign administrators for club station applications.

A copy of the entire Report and Order (FCC99-412) is available at <http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf> or at [http://fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily-Business/1999/db991230fcc99-412.txt](http://fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily-Business/1999/db991230fcc99-412.txt)

From ARRL letter

## **My Time Capsul**

### **By P.E. Watts**

It seems that the new millennium has everyone filling out time capsules with stuff or predictions of the future. These are my time capsule predictions for Amateur Radio.....  
By the year 2010: All use of mobile Ham gear will be forbidden or restricted to stationary operation only, this will be by Federal Law.  
by the year 2015: The power output of any Amateur Radio transmitter will be restricted to no more than 100 watts ERP.....  
All FM 2 meter, 220, 440 & 900 MHz bands will be sold to the highest commercial wireless business bidder.

by the year 2020: The CW mode will be outlawed as encrypted transmissions, and operating such will be punishable by life in prison or a \$10,000 fine. (if caught)

By the year 2023: Hams will form

a secret underground communications league known as ARRL. After Real Radio Left.

In the year 2024: All orbiting satellites will be rendered inoperative by a massive solar flare. All cell-phones will cease to function and the internet communications will be totally disrupted forever.

During the year 2025: A great holocaust will plague the earth and the only communications will be provided by the renegade communications network established by HAMS in earlier years.

P.E. Watts

## Rescue

Long distance rescue via Morse Code: Gene Nailon K5DLRE reports a hiker in the Rockies has a fellow amateur in Oklahoma and Morse Code to thank for helping after he fell ill during a QSO December 17. Larry Watson W5EIU in Oklahoma City answered a CQ on 3710 KHz. from the Wyoming hiker. They talked for about 15 minutes when the Wyoming op told Watson: "I think I am having a heart attack and I can't get to the phone." After that, his transmission broke off, and Watson was unable to raise him further. About the same time, Jim Caldwell, WJOC of Waterloo Iowa, broke in. WJOC was able to look up the full name and location of the Wyoming hiker and relay the information to Watson, who called the police in the Wyoming town to alert them to a potential medical emergency. It turned out they were right. The

Wyoming hiker - whose name and location were unavailable - was hospitalized and the prognosis is said to be good. Watson first licensed at age 13 in 1954, says this was a first for him. (By the way, both Watson and Nailon belong to Central Oklahoma Chapter 63 QCWA.) - Gene Nailon, K5DLE  
From the ARRL Member Extra  
Thanks Rick KB9NDF

## Ring in Y-2K

While most of the country was involved in all sorts of gala celebrations, awaiting the arrival of the new millennium. Some fearing all kinds of disasters, when the clock counted down to 00. A few of us, "members of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club", gathered at the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center, to monitor Television, Telephone and the air-ways for news of any emergency happenings. Those present were, Tug Sutton (EOC Director), J.R. KB9HSE (RACES director), Chuck (KB9TEO RACES member) and myself Al WA9ZET (RACES member). We were monitoring the State emergency frequencies, the 835 machine and had a scanner running. About the only emergencies we heard were Fire, Ambulance and Police runs, and not many of them. The highlight of the night came when Tammy J.R.'s daughter arrived bringing with her a pot of five

hour stew, which J.H.R. had whipped up for the occasion. I had brought a pie. Both the pie and the stew were devoured as the night wore on. We played dominoes until about 10:00PM, talked some more and then went into Tug's office to await the big event. The ball dropped at midnight and the year 2000 came in, for us uneventful. Time Square and Monument Circle were teeming with people. When the ball dropped there was a great deal of shouting, a fireworks display and some very strange human displays. All in all it was an uneventful night. Tug reported in to the State EOC every two hours, and would be there until 6 AM when Annie Leser would arrive to take over. The State EOC stood down about 2 AM. At about 2:30 I went home and J.R. was soon to follow. Chuck would remain until 3 AM when the zero hour would pass out of the continent on the West Coast. All in all a pleasant night. "OH HUM".

WA9ZET

## conspiracy

P.E. watts

Once upon a time on the Blue Marble planet, somewhere in the Galaxy, there was a group of folks known as the "Hobbies". Now the Hobbies had a very simple life and really enjoyed just

just doing their thing , which amounted to getting along with each other in a super way; scratching out a living and helping others; especially in times of disaster and other needs. Oh!; yes did I mention that the Hobbies' comfortable lives was primarily due to their exceptional ability to communicate with each other.? Well it was such an attitude that the Hobbies expanded on this ability, every chance they got. The Hobbies built Telephones, radios and even Television systems that would marvel a Genus. All of the communications systems the Hobbies created were very useful, but FUN; and they enjoyed sharing all their ideas so much, that the planet became alive with groups of Hobbies. Some say, "at one time there were so many groups that the Hobbies even had National and International groups of groups. "so they say! Well as time in the happy lands and big kingdom of the Hobbies pressed on there was a group with the group that saw a way to make a profit from all the great ideas and hard work of the Hobbies. They began to make small profits by selling the Telephone, radio and television ideas to anyone that would buy. Soon they had enough extra money laying around that they began to develop some new ideas of their own. these they patented so they could produce them; because the Hobbies had been watching and might want in on the action.

One of the new ideas tht they created was the computer, at first it didn't attract much attention. Pretty soon the new group had made enough changes that the new device could communicate as well or sometimes better than the Hobbies Telephone, radio & TV.

This new device even worked with all the other Hobbies devices. they gave the new device a nick name, "PC".

The PC began to take charge of everything, even the Hobbies banklin system.

Other small groups began to appear on the planet, for the main purpose of exploiting the Hobbies ideas and make money. In fact this concept caught on so fast, that the planet was soon covered with just about as many groups of Hobbies as the other group.

One sunny afternoon some of the new but smaller groups decided over lunch to form a bigger group than the Hobbies and they called themselves the WEwantitall company, History tells us that the first president of this company was, Mr. Imnst B. Winner.

While the Wewantit all company was holding stock and production meetings the Hobbies had put together their own international outfit , called ARRL.

This ARRL was taken with the job of lobbying for the Hobbies in front of the great big country of

Hobbies planet, they called it "Politics". I think they did that to confuse the Hobbies who just wanted to have fun and help others.

as time passed, each group would so much time trying to get the Wewantitall company to protect their rights to have fun or make a profit that they forgot that they were all originally Hobbies. Back to the ARRL group; this seemed the only hope for the Hobbies and their ideas. Oh! by the way... ARRL stands for angry rooted right and lazy.

One gloomy January day some Hobbies were attending a meeting of the Wewantitall group; I think just to see if they could join. When they heard the letters N.M.H.P. spoken just once. This was puzzling to the Hobbies and they asked some of the Wewantitall's to explain, to their avail no one would tell them what nmhp stood for. Three days passed and one of the Hobbies overheard some of the Wewantitall's talking at lunch, probably a little tipsy.! Any way the conversation grew louder and louder then suddenly one of the Wewantitall's blurted out; they were really shouting at this one poor individual; "Can't you get it right? NMHP stands for the No More Hams Plan.

P.E. watts

January 2000

## The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

### Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, IN. Membership is open to all Amateur Radio Operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted the 3rd. Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center, at 1100 Hospital Rd. in Franklin, In.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full membership, Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator testing is offered following club meetings during the months of March Through November

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues and change of address should be sent the club treasurer at the address below.

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### Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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### January dues are due

Full Membership \$18.00

Associate Membership \$10.00

Student Membership \$6.00

## January one year ago

1999 greeted us very rudely, with 10 inches of blowing snow and freezing rain, which was claimed to be the worst winter storm since the blizzard of 1978. A storm most of won't soon forget.

Our club lost a dear friend in the passing of Kay Osborne J.R., KB9HSE's XYL of 57 years. She was a much loved member of the Wednesday night dinner group, also the provider of the now famous V-8 five hour stew which she provided for many field day dinners. Kay will be greatly missed at club functions, where she was always bright and cheerful. "The life of the Party." **"we will not forget"**

WA9ZET

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### MARC Club Officers

<b>President</b> Al Soltis WA9ZET (317) 933-9011 aso9zer@aol.com	<b>Secretary</b> Bob LaGraque N9SIU	<b>RACES director</b> J.R. Osborne KB9HSE (317) 933-3176	<b>VE coordinator</b> Dave Wendt KA9OOH (317) 974-1488
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Wittfield St. is the first street east of Post Rd. on Post Rd.

then North on Whittfield to 1217

(SEE MAP/BOX)

**Club  
Meeting  
Saturday  
15Th.  
At  
EOC  
8 AM**